

# JUNIOR CONFERENCE PANEL 2

## KOREA BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNIZATION

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So to view East Asian literature from Western theory, he's right in that sense. They have moved away from the norm and have opened themselves to stories which are open to various interpretations. He's argued very well of how this Oh Soo Yeon's *I am Food* can be seen as postmodernist literary piece. And Samantha, in hers, has also argued very well. Foucault's theory of docile body. Again, I think Foucault believes that institutions, you know people, the power and knowledge; he sees the relationship between that; and how through power the body is made to be malleable and respond to the situations. So in her story, which is titled *I have the right to destroy myself* is how they're resisting, the Korean society or the characters in her novel. The two parts, she's handled very well. One is the character of C who has a control over these three characters, and yet does not want to be seen as somebody who has complete control. But he's maneuvering them into acts of what he would like them to do. And yet not showing it as though he's the one who's sort of getting them to do it. And the characters reacting to it and deciding to commit suicide more not so much as a release from the various hardships that they are going through or the dissatisfaction or the disgruntlement, but more

as a sense of release that if I kill myself, you won't have a reason to be what you want; or be happy, and would sort of lead you to introspect on the way you have been ruling because you've not done your bit. So in effect, the government and the people in Korea, it is the government which is very repressing. And all throughout, their success story has been successful only because of repressive policies of the government and the Korean brainwashing and conditioning of following everything that has been dictated to them. Held by the philosophy, the Confucianism philosophy, which tells them not to question authority but to accept it. So you have the undertone of the philosophy which conditions their brain, their mindset and you have a government which ensures that this is what you're expected to do and therefore, you shall do without questioning. And there was this very little resistance to reclaiming land, to meeting various things which, was met with so much resistance in India. So, you have, there are plus points to it, and there are negative points as well. And this story that she's picked, that she has chosen clearly brings out how industrialization led to various problems and people started questions. And they said, "Oh is this the kind of life we want to live? By committing suicide, emotionally, they have tried to overcome that. The two articles argued very well, on the stories, did very well on the theories that they have taken and I would like to congratulate the two of you. Thank you very much.